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UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS
EPISODE NO. 416

For presentation Tuesday,
December 24, 1940

ANNOUNCER: Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers

MUSIC: Ranger Song

ANNOUNCER: Brilliantly lighted and decorated, the evergreen tree symbolizes the presence of the Christmas spirit in homes, schools, churches, shops, and community centers throughout the nation. Nobody knows exactly how the Xmas tree custom originated but from the many colorful legends passed down to us we do know that the relationship between Christmas and the forest is centuries old. And so here on the National Farm and Home Hour on the day before Christmas the National Broadcasting Company with the cooperation of the United States Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture considers it most appropriate to bring you Harvey Hayes, Judith Lowry --- and Lucile Husting, your friends of the Friday programs, in a special Forest Rangers Christmas story. In our story today Harvey Hayes appears in his regular role as Ranger Jim Robbins, but _____ whom you regularly know as Assistant Ranger Jerry Quick will appear as Bill Parsons and Miss Lowry and Miss Husting, who are Bess and Mary on the Friday programs will appear in other parts today. But now let's let these old friends of the Farm and Home Hour audience tell us their story.

As we look in on the Pine Cone Ranger Station in the little town of Winding Creek, deep in the snowclad forests and mountains, we find Ranger Jim with his wife Bess, and Jerry and Mary in the ranger station livingroom. Dusk has already fallen outside and the only illumination

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comes from the warm glow of the logs in the big stone fireplace around which our friends are gathered -- and from the many-colored lights on the beautiful, sweet-scented fir tree which they have just finished decorating. This peaceful and comfortable setting which we like to think of as typical of millions of American homes today has put Jim in his best story-telling mood. And after a little urging from Bess and Jerry and Mary we find Jim now, just getting started on one of his usual interesting yarns.

JIM:* (FADE IN CHUCKLING) You and Jerry and Mary are worse than three kids, Bess -- always badgerin' me to tell a story. Some of these times I'm gonna run out of stories and then I probably won't come in for any consideration around here at all... But you asked for it so here goes... I'll tell you the story of the strangest Christmas I ever had. I've never told this story before ... and I'm not at all sure I ought to tell it now. It's one of those kind of stories hard to believe. Even though I went through it I've never been able to figure out some of the things that happened that Christmas myself. But there's some things that happen in this old world of ours that I guess we're not meant to figure out no matter how hard we try... Anyway it all started like this. A good many years back when I was just a young buck cuttin' my eye-teeth in the Forest Service ... and before I met Bess ... another young ranger named Bill Parsons and me were workin' on a timber cruise on the old Bearpaw National Forest that butted up against the Canadian border in the north country. In those days there weren't many trails and not much was known about that country. And for that matter it's pretty wild country still. A kind of a no-man's land and

THESE THINGS ARE NOT TO BE TAKEN TOO SERIOUSLY

AND YOU SHOULD NOT LET THEM GET TO YOU

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especially in winter. Well, one evening about three weeks before Christmas, Bill and me came in from a day's cruising and there was a couple of letters (FADING) waiting for us.....

PAUSE

BILL: (FADING IN) Hah mail from the supervisor's office. Maybe they're gonna give us a break and let us get out of the wilderness for a little Christmas vacation at that.

JIM: Yeah. Let's see what we've got here. It's been so long since we've heard from the Supervisor I figured he'd forgotten all about us.

SOUND OF ENVELOPE BEING TORN OPEN

BILL: Well for... Say, what is this?

JIM: H-m-m-m.

BILL: (READS SLIGHTLY PUZZLED) "This man is urgently wanted by federal authorities for extradition to a foreign country. Traced to the southeastern border of the province of British Columbia by the Canadian Mounted Police it is believed that he and his wife and mother crossed the boundary into the United States probably somewhere in the forested region of northern Idaho. Since you and Jim Robbins are familiar with this territory I am assigning you two to a search for this man until the first of the New Year."....Now isn't that sweet! Not a word about Christmas... just another special job to do and a mean one at that.

JIM: Yeah. While the supervisor's sittin' down to a fine plum pudding on Christmas day he fixes it up so you and me'll be chewin' on old dried up piece of jerky up here in the timber. I can think of a lot of other ways I'd rather spend Christmas than bein' out on a man hunt too.

BILL: What a grand old Santy Calus he turned out to be. I don't know about you Jim, but this makes me mad enough to cash in my chips and quit.

JIM: U-m-m. Nope I don't think I'd do that Bill. The old man is rubbin' it in, sendin' us out on a detail like this right at this time of year, but I wouldn't want him to think we were a couple of quitters.

BILL: Well, you got something there all right. By George he knows what a long hard siege we've had up here. Maybe he's just tryin' to see how tough we are. Personally, though I think Haddock's just naturally downright mean. Of all the times to start out on a man hunt....

JIM: U-m-m. Did you read this description of the man? Says here he's well educated, courteous, genteel manner.... At one time or another he really must have been somebody.

BILL: Yeah. 's funny he'd pick this part of the world to hide away in.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) You can't think of any better one to lose yourself in, can you?

BILL: No, Jim. But this is tough country. You've got to be a real woodsman to exist here. And why in tarnation would he ever drag women in to a place like this?

JIM: It's beyond me. There's not a thing said about what he's wanted for. You know Bill this may be an interesting assignment at that. If we can catch up with this fella and find out what his story is it may not be such a dull Christmas after all.

BILL: Uh. Maybe not ... not if he catches up with us first. Maybe you failed to notice there at the end where it says that he's a dead shot (FADING) and if cornered will probably shoot to kill.

MUSIC UP AND OUT

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FADE IN SOUND OF MEN WALKING ON SNOWSHOES

JIM: (SLIGHTLY OFF MIKE) How you makin' it, Bill?

BILL: I'm still with you, Jim, but it's plenty tough goin' through this soft snow. Let's sit down here and rest awhile.

JIM: Okay Bill. Is that bum ankle of yours botherin' you quite a bit?

BILL: Yeah. My bread-basket's botherin' me so much more though, that my ankle's just a minor handicap now, Jim. Boy howdy, what I wouldn't give for a good square meal. I could eat a thousand pound steer, hoofs and all.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Well, tomorrow's Christmas, Bill. Just think what a fine feed you're gonna get then.

BILL: Aw Jim, it ain't funny and dawgonit I don't think it's fair. The old man didn't have to send us out on a wildgoose chase like this right at Christmas.....

JIM: Why Bill, this country is full of the old Christmas spirit. Just look at all the Christmas trees around here.....

BILL: Jim, I'm serious. We been scoutin' around in this wilderness two weeks now and we're right where we started from... no where. We haven't even seen a good fresh rabbit track.... let alone an Oxford graduate or whatever he is, and a couple of women... Jim let's call this thing quits and pull out.....

JIM: (EXCITED SOTO) Hold it, Bill. I just saw something move up there on the ridge looked like a man.

BILL: Huh?

JIM: There he is again. See him, Bill?

BILL: By George. He's crossin' our backtrack. It may be... Come on Jim.

(FADING) Let's circle around through this timber and get in ahead of him.

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BRIEF PAUSE

FADE IN SOUND OF BLIZZARD AND BACK

BILL: (SHOUTING INTO THE WIND) Jim. Hey Jim!

JIM: (SHOUTING SLIGHTLY OFF MIKE) Yo!

BILL: (SHOUTING) Wait a minute will you? (GROANS)

JIM: (COMING ON) Going gettin' too tough, old man?

BILL: (CHATTERING WITH COLD) Twenty miles on snow shoes is a long way Jim.
And with a bum ankle it's twice as far.

JIM: If this blizzard hadn't come up, we'd've caught that fella.

BILL: I know... Look Jim. You go ahead. I can't keep up any more and it's
gettin' darker and colder all the time. You go ahead as long as you
can and as long as you can see the trail....only a man with seven-
league boots could travel like this bird has traveled since we picked
up his trail.

JIM: But Bill, you.....

BILL: Sure. You-you go ahead and I...I'll build a little fire and (WEAK
CHATTERING LAUGH) and celebrate Christmas eve right here. That line
cabin we were plannin' on stoppin' in tomorrow can't be far from here.
Tomorrow...tomorrow I'll be better and I'll meet you and we'll have
Christmas dinner there, roast goose, plum pudding and everything else
that goes with it. Go...go...on Jim... just leave me here.

JIM: (SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING CHUCKLE) No Bill, I....

BILL: Don't argue with me, Jim. It looks like I'm I'm lettin' you
down.. but.. but my whole... whole left leg is numb. Go ahead... and
good luck, Jim. I'll be right comfortable here.

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem.

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JIM: Bill! Get up. If you sit down here in this snow and cold you'll never get up again. (FADING INTO WIND) We'll find a better place to camp than this. Get up and keep moving. Come on!

MUSIC IN OVER WIND..... UP AND OUT

WOMAN'S VOICE: (MARY) Are you cold, Mother? Put this shawl around your shoulders.

WOMAN'S VOICE: (BESS) Ah dear, no shawl can cover the cold that I feel tonight.

The cold is here in my heart. Christmas eve.... and here we are.... hiding... hiding from the world in this strange wild land. When I think of all the other Christmas eve's, the friends, the gay times we had.. Oh what's the use of it... what's the use of it? My son a fugitive....

MARY: Now mother. Now, now! Please take this shawl. It will warm you some. And it's more warmth to know that he's innocent. We know he was no traitor to his country... and many of the people know it too. Some day....

BESS: Oh yes, perhaps, some day....but for me that day is too far from here. I could have arranged for his pardon....

MARY: No, mother. He wouldn't have it that way. Some day they'll know the truth and it will be different, but now.... It's not so bad here. See how comfortable his friends here have made this cabin. And he likes it here. He loves the woods and the snow and the mountains. If it weren't for our baby I think he'd like to be here always... But they won't find him here in the mountains... Nobody can....

SOUND OF SCUFFING AND DULLED KNOCKING AT DOOR

BESS: (FRIGHTENED) What's that? Some one's there. Some one listening at the door. They've come.....

MARY: Quiet, mother. He's the only one that could find his way here. It was probably only the snow beating on the door any way.

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject.

2. The second part is a detailed description of the methods used in the study.

3. The third part is a discussion of the results of the study.

4. The fourth part is a conclusion and a list of references.

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28. The twenty-eighth part is a list of tables.

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30. The thirtieth part is a list of symbols.

DULL KNOCKING REPEATED

BESS: No. No. There is some one at the door. The gun... There it is in the corner....

MARY: No, mother. I'll open the door.

SOUND OF BOLT IN DOOR BEING THROWN BACK AND DOOR OPENED TO WHINE OF STORM OUTSIDE

JIM: (WEAKLY) My pardner here... he... I.... followed your light... (GROAN)

SOUND OF MEN FALLING

BESS: Rangers!

MARY: Help Mother. They're almost dead with the cold.

BESS: Let them stay out there and freeze.

MARY: No. No. He must have guided them here. They'd never have found us if he hadn't. Quick! Help me drag them in mother and close the door.

SOUND OF SCUFFING AND WOMEN STRAINING FOLLOWED BY CLOSING OF DOOR

BESS: (SOBBING) They came here to murder... to take him away. Why do they always follow and follow when all he wants is rest and peace? Why should we take them in? Why did they have to come here?

MARY: If he had wanted them to die he would have killed them. He sent them here. He guided them here, I know. It's Christmas eve. Quick Mother get some snow to rub on their faces. They're frozen. I'll set the signal (FADING) to let him know they came here.

MUSIC UP AND OUT

FADE IN SOUND OF MEN BREATHING HEAVILY, AS IN SLEEP)

BILL: (GROANS, MUMBLES, WAKING UP) Just a little farther...uh...gotta keep goin'....

SOLO SNORING CONTINUES

BILL: (WIDER AWAKE) Hey, Jim! Wake up. Where are we, Jim?

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JIM: (DROWSILY) Huh?

BILL: Jim! Look. Wake up. We're not there...we're some where else.
We're in our own cabin... The Forest Service line cabin.

JIM: Uh (YAWNS) Where else did you expect to be? (SUDDENLY AWAKE) Huh?
Say I thought you had a bum leg. How'd you get around to build that
fire in the fire place?

BILL: Ouch! Um. My ankle...it must have happened last night. Jim, are you
awake? Can you see me? Do I look all right?

JIM: Yep. But by George, this is queer. I'd know this old cabin anywhere.
That's where we are all right...this is the Papoose Creek cabin. By
George! Bill, there's something wrong here.

BILL: Huh, you're telling me....Jim, things like this just don't happen.
H-m-m-m. Let's see. My knife. Then it must have happened. It's
gone.... Jim, see if you've got your watch there....It must be true
because my knife is gone. See if your watch....

JIM: Why sure I've.... U-m-m.... Maybe it's in this other pocket....

BILL: No it ain't. You haven't got it, Jim. You can't have. I saw you
give it to him the same time I gave him my knife...Aw no. This can't
be Christmas day. It must be some other time. How'd we ever get here?

JIM: What I want to know is how you started that fire?

BILL: I didn't start it. I thought you started it. Say... The whole thing's
crazy, Jim. It doesn't add up at all.

JIM: Now wait a minute here. There must be some explanation for this.
Let's think back from here. What's the last thing you remember?

BILL: You mean that I really remember.... or that I think I remember?

JIM: Well, what do you think you remember?

BILL: Jim, the last thing I remember before wakin' up here this mornin' was
givin' thanks to the Almighty for deliverin' me half frozen into the

hands of the most beautiful woman and the nicest old lady in the world and then goin' to sleep in a nice warm bunk.

JIM: Uh huh. And it wasn't this cabin....

BILL: No sir. Nothin' like it at all... And what's more, there was a little baby there... a baby with big blue eyes and blond curly hair and when you asked the woman whose baby it was she said it was his son. And then it bein' Christmas eve and on account of all they'd done you and me decided we ought to show our appreciation and you gave the baby your watch and I gave him my carved-handle hunting knife... Jim, am I talkin' crazy? Were you and me really there?

JIM: (CHUCKLES) I dunno Bill. It don't sound very logical but I know my watch has sure enough disappeared.

BILL: H-m-m. And my knife's gone too. That oughta prove we weren't dreamin' and the two of us couldn't have had the same dream at the same time anyhow.

JIM: H-m-m. Let's see. You remember about the time it was gettin' good and dark up there on the trail in the storm and you just up and decided you were gonna set down and make camp right there, don't you, Bill?

BILL: Yep. You got me up and kept me from freezin' there. And then we went on a little farther and you'd been helpin' me and all of a sudden you wanted to camp and I had to.... Jim I really didn't mean it when I told you I'd shoot you if you didn't get up and keep movin'. It was all I could do....

JIM: If you hadn't done that I'd a froze....

BILL: Well then, after that we both finally come to the end of our rope and neither one of us much gave a hoot what happened. And right

then's when this thing started to happen. We saw that star.

JIM: Uh huh. Except that you thought it was a star and I kept tellin' you it wasn't a star at all....that it was a light.

BILL: Yeah. And we got to arguing about it. I kept tellin' you it was the star of Bethlehem and you said it was nothin' but a plain ordinary light in a cabin. You remember that?

JIM: I sure do and I remember we both got mad enough about it that we both got up and started out to find out who was right. But we didn't go far before you went out cold as a log.

BILL: I can just barely remember you tryin' to pick me up and carry me.

JIM: You were still arguin' about something when I picked you up. And then we got to the light and it really was a light....

BILL: I still think it was a star....

JIM: Well anyway, if it hadn't been for the folks in that cabin....

BILL: We wouldn't have been here. I understand that, Jim. But now all I'm askin' is how in tarnation did we get here? It wasn't this cabin.

JIM: H-m-m. I dunno. I swear it wasn't this cabin, and besides that my watch is gone and your knife.... Ey George, those two women, that guy somehow or other might have brought us here... Anybody who can get over the snow like he did....

BILL: Yeah. Santa Claus. Put us in his bag, hitched up his reindeer and...

JIM: That's it... A toboggan... He brought us here, and built a fire in the fireplace and.... Sure... We can probably see the tracks in the snow yet this morning... Maybe we can backtrack him... and uh... if I can just get this door open... (SOUND OF DOOR COMING OPEN TO SOUND OF BLIZZARD STILL RAGING OUTSIDE) Ah whoooo. B-r--r.

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BILL: Shut the door. (SOUND OF DOOR BEING CLOSED) No tracks, huh, Jim?

JIM: A man couldn't live in that blizzard, let alone.....

BILL: You really didn't want to backtrack that fellow and take him in, did you Jim?

JIM: Well, we had our orders... and that cabin of their's can't be so awfully far from here.

BILL: No Jim, I don't think it is, but neither is the border.

JIM: Huh? What do you mean?

BILL: Just like this, Jim. Last night when we were both out on our feet stumblin' around out there in that blizzard I came to just in time to notice something. It was a boundary marker. That cabin... if there really is another cabin... is somewhere in Canada... and our jurisdiction don't extend up there.

JIM: Bill, are you sure we crossed the border?

BILL: Jim, I've never been so sure of anything in my life and I'm ready to swear to it on a stack of bibles....

JIM: Well, that ends our man-hunt, then. He's out of our jurisdiction.

BILL: Yep...Say, by jickety, this is Christmas morning, ain't it, Jim?

JIM: Yep.

BILL: How about opening our presents?

JIM: Presents? Have you gone...

BILL: Sure and so have you. But there's a strange lookin' package up there on the mantle and I can't wait any longer....

JIM: By George. (SOUND OF PAPER BEING TORN - CHUCKLES) Well, this beats all.

BILL: (IMPATIENTLY) Get out of the way Jim so I can see it. I can't....

JIM: (CHUCKLES) It's a great big fresh loaf of home-made bread, Bill. And here's a note...h-m-m...in a woman's handwriting....

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee. The names are listed in alphabetical order, and the addresses are listed in the order in which they were received.

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names and addresses of the members of the committee who have been elected to the office of the chairperson. The names are listed in alphabetical order, and the addresses are listed in the order in which they were received.

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BILL: Well, read it, Jim. What does it say?

JIM: (CHUCKLES) What do you think it says? It says: Merry Christmas, Rangers, and a Happy New Year.

BILL: No...o...o... Honest, Jim?

JIM: Here's the note.

BILL: H-m-m. Aw say. Imagine that. You know this is all too mixed up for either one of us ever to mention in safe and sane society, Jim; But neither one of us will ever forget it. I reckon this is about the best Christmas we'll ever have. (LAUGH) Imagine that... A loaf of bread and... our lives, too... Jim... (FADING) Peace on earth and good will to men.

MUSIC: FINALE

ANNOUNCER: This has been a special program of Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers, regularly heard every Friday on the National Farm and Home Hour as a presentation of the National Broadcasting Company with the cooperation of the United States Forest Service. Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers, including Ranger Jim Robbins, and Bess, Mary and Jerry, wish you all a very Merry Christmas indeed, and they'll be back with us again one week from next Friday.

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